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A DOUBT.

If I could find a rose without a thorn,
A fragrant blossom with no bitter taste,
A day of sunshine with no spot of cloud,
A world without a dreary desert waste,
Or one bright hope unshadowed and serene,
One perfect trust with every fear cast out,
My heart could rest upon the promise sweet,
Laying aside the ever-present doubt.

The shadow dim that falls upon the ring
When wedded palms are clasped in fond embrace;
The spectre at the banquet, and the guest
That silently usurps the highest place;
The presence all unseen, yet ever near;
The minor note to every joyous strain;
The echoing thrill that answers rapture sweet
With something very near akin to pain.

It dims the lustre of the conqueror's sword,
And falls upon the radiance of the cross;
No alchemy can purify the gold
Beyond the clinging of its ashen dross;
It falleth like a mildew on the page
Where weary fingers toil for empty fame,
And on the shining scutcheon of the great,
Beside the greatest there, it writes its name.

—D. M. Jordan.

THE EAGLE IN THE SEA-BIRD'S NEST.

It was not the regular "visitor's day" at the Old Ladies' Home, but the matron was an old friend of mine, and moreover appreciated the importance to me, as a spinner of old-time yarns, of the chance for a confidential chat, now and then, with certain dear old ladies whose worldly hopes and fears and trials had all fallen from their aged shoulders into the dim uncertainty of the past, from which memory might, however, in answer to a little judicious jogging, bring up the shade of many a departed joy or sorrow whose tender pathos never failed to stir my heart to its very depths with a wondering pity for those other sorely stricken hearts, that Time, the great physician, had so wonderfully soothed and quieted at the last.

I was not in the mood to-day for anything wonderful or exciting, and for that reason I passed quietly by the room within which I well knew Madame Le Clarge was sitting, stately and upright in spite of her eighty odd years, her snow-white hair worn in puffs about her thin, delicately featured face, and her still slender and deft fingers busy with the netting that was to her at once an occupation and a pleasure.

There were times when I would have been delighted by a few artfully timed questions to draw out some incidents of that strange and eventful history that even time could not erase from the memory — of a childhood spent among the terrible scenes of the French Revolution; of the fair, high-born dames that her childish eyes had seen driven in the executioner's cart on their way to the guillotine, their hands bound behind their backs, and their pale faces distorted with terror, or serene with conscious innocence and the hope of a glorious immortality; of the flight from that mob-accursed land; of the precious gold pieces, the only remnant of a once large fortune, quilted into a silk petticoat that the mother wore on shipboard; of the arrival in a strange country, and of all the wonderful vicissitudes that had made her life a continual romance from her cradle upward — all these were delightful in their proper time and place, but to-day I felt no relish for them or anything else that could jar upon the lazy monotony of my mood: even old Betty Skinner's stories of pioneer life, to which I had so often listened in rapt wonderment, the "treed bar," the "Indian devil-scare," or even the "tamed wolf's cub," failed to satisfy me just now.

It was too warm, too quiet and dreamy this pleasant July afternoon, for tales of blood and adventure; it was just the day to hear about, if you can not see, the lapping of cool waters upon a smooth, sandy beach, mingled with the faintest whisper of a sea-breeze gossiping with the nodding pine-tops, and kissing the cheeks of the sleepy-eyed primroses and beach-peas that are too lazy to so much as rustle their leaves in return. And that is why I sought, in preference to my more talkative old lady friends, the society of that little, quiet, ineffusive body, whose refined but somewhat precise ways, added to the fact of her former occupation as a school-teacher, had procured for her the playful *soubriquet* of "Miss Minute-Hand," the matron often declaring that the superannuated little teacher measured off her days into just so many minutes, with an appointed duty for each minute; and this afternoon, as I tapped

at the door of her room, a faint rustling, followed by the creak of a refractory bureau drawer, warned me that its methodical occupant was engaged in her daily task of examining and arranging her ample store of linen in the separate drawers, although, when I saw the slight embarrassment that my entrance caused her, I pretended not to notice the unwonted confusion, until, with an abruptness very unusual in her, she called my attention to an article that she had evidently just taken from its wrappings and was holding up for my inspection.

"There, Miss Anne, is a real Indian shawl; the colors are as bright and fresh to-day as when I first saw it, nearly fifty years ago."

I looked at the beautiful fabric with almost as much astonishment as admiration. Here, in the possession of one of the inmates of a public charitable institution, was one of the most elegant shawls that I had ever looked upon — a garment fit for a queen, and for which many a wealthy dame would have been glad to pay a small fortune.

I looked from the shawl to its owner, in dumb amazement, and then I noticed for the first time the tearful eye and tremulous lip with which she contemplated the gorgeous folds, that, lighted by some stray scraps of sunshine which stole through the half-open blind, seemed strangely out of place in the comfortable but soberly furnished room.

"I never wore it in my life," she said, tenderly refolding the costly fabric, "and I suppose I might have sold it for enough to have secured me from dependence in my old age; but," and her voice grew husky with emotion, "I couldn't bear to part with it — my eagle sent it to me."

I suppose I looked as I felt, completely mystified, for she smiled with an archness that I had never before seen in her, and that changed the whole expression of her face as completely as a mask could have done; and then, carefully replacing the shawl in its drawer, she said, gently:

"I will tell you about this shawl if it won't be too tiresome for you to listen to an old woman's story about herself, and not much of a story either, for I don't know anything about 'condensing,' as you story-writers call it. What I have to tell I must tell in my own rambling, roundabout fashion."

Of course, I was only too glad to listen, and she went on in her soft, lady-like voice that was in itself a pleasure to listen to.

I was left an orphan at a very early age; so early that I could not even remember my mother's kisses, although I did have a faint, shadowy recollection of being lifted up to look at a still, white face beneath a glass coffin-lid, and of pitying voices whispering to me to "take a last look at my poor mother," while a bustling, sharp-eyed gentleman, with crape on his hat, informed me that he was my guardian, and that his house was henceforth to be my home.

The inmates of that "home" consisted of himself and his wife, a melancholy, dissatisfied-looking lady, who seemed always suffering from an attack of neuralgia if a chair was moved incautiously, or the hearth-rug in the least disarranged, with an elderly servant-maid whose principal characteristics, as I remember her, seemed to be an inordinate love of her own way, and an equally inordinate hatred of all young creatures, children especially. I can remember to this day the dread with which she inspired me; and when Mrs. Walters would send me to the kitchen on some errand my heart would beat so with terror at the sight of her scowling, ugly face, that it seemed sometimes as if I should suffocate, and I have lain awake many a night listening to her heavy breathing and mutterings in her sleep (I slept in the room adjoining hers, that, as Mrs. Walters said, I might have somebody to "see to me" in case of sickness), and trembling like a leaf if they ceased for a moment, expecting to hear her heavy step by my bedside, and her harsh voice calling out;

"Arrah, now! ye imp o' Satan! an' what are ye wakin' for at this time o' night?"

My guardian, who had his own ideas on education, as on most other matters, was decidedly opposed to public schools, for children of a tender age especially; and so a day governess was procured for me, a quiet, sedate girl, who considered her duties performed when she had heard me repeat, with scrupulous exactness, the lessons for the day, and had portioned out those for the morrow, with the inevitable remark:

"I shall expect you to have them perfect, Miss Mildred, when I come to-morrow."

Never a word of commendation or encourage-

ment, much less any expression of sympathy or interest in my childish pursuits and pleasures! Although, as far as these were concerned, it would have puzzled a much more observant person than my prim little governess to find them out.

Mrs. Walters had never been able to endure the "litter" of children's playthings about the house, and when, on one long-remembered Christmas, my guardian surprised and delighted me with a beautiful wax doll, she put it carefully away in a drawer, wrapped in tissue paper, and only when I had been a particularly good girl, that is, when I hadn't spoken louder than a whisper, or walked across the floor more heavily than her favorite pussy, for a whole day, was I allowed, as a great treat, a peep at the rosy cheeks and staring blue eyes of my imprisoned treasure; although I was allowed under no consideration to touch, much less handle or play with it.

The house of Mr. Walters had a handsome flower-garden in front, with walks as smooth and clean as a floor, and curiously formed beds filled with rare and beautiful plants — too rare and beautiful for childish fingers to meddle with — so I was obliged to content myself with the buttercups and dandelions that grew in the little back yard, and especially the burdock burrs that were to me a never-failing source of quiet, homely amusement. How I delighted to make them into baskets, tables and chairs, which, with a clothes-pin in dandelion curls for the mistress, I converted into a very satisfactory baby-house. Once a broken-winged chicken strayed into the inclosure, and for a couple of days I was supremely happy in petting and doctoring the helpless little thing; but Bridget soon spied it out and wrung its neck, much to my grief and horror, for the poor creature had been to me more of a friend and companion than I had ever known in all those lonely, loveless days, of which the remembrance, even now, makes me shiver, and shrink into myself like some sensitive-plant at a rough or careless touch.

Having no human companionship, I naturally, like all imaginative children, made for myself friends and familiars out of the inanimate objects about me. I rechristened the different articles of furniture in my room: the bureau was "Grandmother Knobby," and was my special friend and confidant in all my childish troubles; a slender, old-fashioned washstand was the fashionable "Miss Bowles," and to her I described the dress of any of Mrs. Walters' genteel callers that I happened to see, and confided to her my opinion of their respective charms; the chairs were visitors, servants, or children, just as the fancy of the moment prompted; and I can remember how I delighted to lie awake on moonlight nights, talking with my imaginary friends, and weaving a host of foolish and pleasant conceits, suited to my childish capacity, until the lonely little room would be all alive with a crowd of merry, chatty comrades, who understood my thoughts just as well as if they had been spoken, and to whose imaginary chatter I would listen with a heart full of restful satisfaction.

Of course, this life of constant repression and morbid fancies was injurious to me physically as well as mentally, and one pleasant midsummer morning my guardian awoke all at once to a consciousness of my pale cheeks and thin, stooping figure, and announced, in his dictatorial way, that "something must be done for me, immediately." What that "something" was I learned a few days later, when, on entering my room, I found Bridget busily packing my trunk, and when I timidly ventured some inquiries, I was told, with a grim humor that betrayed her own hearty concurrence in the scheme, that "the mather was a goin' to take me to the say-shore, to put me in pickle an' see if I'd kape a few years longer."

That first view of the broad, blue, mighty ocean! I can remember, even now, — and the remembrance makes my old heart bound again with something of the freshness and delight of youth, — how its shining surface, dotted with white-winged vessels, and sparkling as if every wave had a jewel in his cap, seemed to me to stretch so far, far away into immensity, that I actually caught my breath in a sort of rapturous terror at its grandeur and sublimity.

Half-way up the pine-dotted cliff that overhung the shore, nestled a small, unpretending, but cosy cottage, occupied by a fisherman's family; and it was here, to my silent but intense delight, that Mr. Walters pointed as my temporary home.

"Between the out-of-door exercise and the sea air and bathing," he said briskly, "it will be very strange if you fail to come back to us as stout and ruddy as

anybody need be." And giving me in charge to the fisherman's wife, he hurried off, evidently relieved to feel that I was off his hands for the next three months, at least. If my first feeling was one of strangerhood, the hearty cordiality of my hostess's greeting soon put me at my ease, and almost before I knew it I was frolicking with baby Jack, a plump, black-eyed little rogue who "took to me," as his mother smilingly declared, "at first sight," kneading my thin cheeks with his dimpled fists, and putting up his pretty pink toes for me to play "This little pig went to market" with.

There were two older children, a frank-faced, manly looking boy, not far from my own age, and Molly, a rosy, buxom little maiden, a few years younger; these, with their young mother, constituted the family at present, as the father was away on a three months cruise.

I believe nothing in my life had ever tasted so good to me as that first supper of brown bread and milk, served in bowls of common crockery with pewter spoons, and I looked up in unfeigned astonishment as Mrs. Mack began to apologize for her plain fare. "We live rough," she said, with a smile that showed all her pretty white teeth, "but your guardian knew that before he brought you here, and he said it was just what you needed, after living on dainties so long."

Shy as I was, I actually laughed outright. What greater dainty could any one desire than this same bowl of bread and milk, eaten within sound of the pleasant, sleepy murmur of the incoming tide, and flavored with the spicy odors that the pine-trees flung down upon us? I said so, in my childish way, and my hostess nodded a good-natured approval of my powers of adaptation, as she evidently understood it.

At the end of a month I don't believe that even Mr. Walters himself would have recognized in the sunburnt, glad-faced child, whose laugh rang out every whit as merrily as that of her young companions, his pale, silent little charge. For the first time since my remembrance I was free—free to follow the natural impulses of my age and nature; and the little Macks recounted each day, with proud satisfaction, stories of my exploits in climbing and fishing, as well as rowing; for, under Rob's tuition, I soon learned to handle an oar as skillfully as any shore-bred maiden could have done; while with his guidance and help I explored the rocky cliffs, and startled the sea-birds from their nests with our wild whoops of triumphant delight.

Barefooted like my playmates, I searched among the rocks and seaweed that the receding tide had left wet and bare from their salt sea bath, for the little holes in the sand, "clams' windows" we called them, that betokened the presence of those tempting bivalves; and there was a delightful excitement in digging for the hidden treasures, scooping them out from beneath some innocent-looking rock or cluster of tangled kelp, laughing when a tiny spray struck us full in the face, and tugging persistently at something that when brought to light, was often nothing but a smooth stone, or, more provoking still, an ugly, useless "mud clam."

Almost every cloudy day saw us out fishing in the tiny boat that Rob had bought himself, as he proudly informed me, by selling fish, doing odd jobs for the farmers, and serving as cook on board one of the little fishing-smacks during a whole season the year before; and Mrs. Mack's table was kept well supplied by our united labors with plenty of fish, while for dessert we had abundance of delicious wild strawberries that we picked in our rambles farther inland.

To a heart so long shut out from the love and sympathy of its kind, this free yet tenderly sympathetic home life was like sunshine to a pinched and starved flower, strengthening, beautifying, and blessing it in every leaf and petal. I shall never forget how, on one occasion, after straying farther than usual, I came home at night footsore and heated, too tired even to share the supper of my more hardy playfellows, and the mother insisted, in spite of a few shame-faced remonstrances on my part, in rocking me to sleep in her own arms, crooning, meanwhile, a quaint, sweet old sea-ballad, whose echoes ring in my ears to-day; and I can almost feel the clasp of her strong, warm arm about my shoulders, and see the look of tender pity upon her motherly face, as she said softly, as if in excuse to herself for giving baby Jack's rightful place to a stranger: "Poor little thing! she's fairly tuckered out; and no wonder, either, such a weakly creature as she is."

More than once she mended, with more good will

than skill, it must be confessed, the big rents that the sharp-pointed rocks and brambles had made in my garments, and at Rob's solicitation, bestowed upon me an old, broad-brimmed "Panama" that had been thrown aside by her husband, to save my own daintily beribboned "Leghorn" from the certain destruction that daily contact with wind and weather would be sure to bring.

It was the first time, I remember, that I wore the hat, that Rob imparted to me that wonderful secret of the eagle's egg.

"Milly!" he called in a mysterious tone, one morning, as I sat upon a great stone in the shadow of the cliff, watching the tide creeping up, inch by inch, laughing and sparkling as if in great glee, yet all the time encroaching more and more upon the still unwet sands, "if you'll come with me I'll show you the oddest sight that you've ever seen yet."

I started to my feet, but paused a moment to look toward Molly, who was paddling in the water a little way off.

"No, no!" and Rob nodded and frowned emphatically. "I don't want her—come alone." And I obeyed.

The cliff was not a very high one, but the sun was hot and the path steep, so that Rob was obliged to lend me a helping hand to reach the top, where, after a moment's rest, he led me cautiously down a curiously winding path, a sort of natural stairway upon the face of the rock, to a broad shelf where a few hardy evergreens had found room for their roots in the broad crevices of the rock; and there, nestled snugly within their shade, was a large, roughly fashioned nest of sticks and twigs, from which the unwieldy heads and scraggy necks of several half-fledged sea-birds were thrust out with an impatient, hungry cry that was almost human in its fretfulness.

"They don't mind me," whispered Rob, advancing cautiously to the nest and dropping a fat clam into each gaping throat before he beckoned me to his side.

"What great creatures they are!" I exclaimed with more of wonder than admiration, "and so awkward and homely! But—" I paused abruptly as a head rose slowly and majestically above those of the clamorous group, and a pair of fierce, fiery eyes looked out defiantly at us, while in a note higher and stronger than the peevish clamor of its mates, it sent forth a sharp, imperative cry for food.

"What is it?" I whispered, half-frightened, yet full of wondering admiration at the lordly bearing of this strange nestling.

"It's an eaglet."

"But how came it here?" I persisted, half incredulous still.

"That's what I'm going to tell you." And his handsome boyish face glowed with happy importance. "I climbed 'Beaker's Cliff' one day, and found an eagle's nest with one egg in it, and on my way home I ran across this nest and dropped the egg into it, and the stupid old birds never mistrusted that it wasn't one of their own, not even after it hatched, but have fed and coddled him with the rest and tried their best to make a common fisherman out of him; but they *can't* do it. He's begun to feel his wings, and he'll be trying them soon, let me tell you. It has seemed to me, sometimes, when I've been watching him, as if he *knew* that he was different from these low birds, even if he did break the shell in the same nest."

I laughed, but with a little trembling, as I saw the bright eyes of the young eaglet watching us so fearlessly. Just then a loud flapping of wings betokened the return of the parent birds, and Rob and I hurried up the rocky stairway just in time to escape being seen by them.

"I wish we could see him when he takes his flight," I said; but Rob shook his head doubtfully.

"It would be too risky to be so near him; he might knock us off that narrow shelf with his strong wings."

Several times afterward we visited the nest, and each time we could see that the princely changeling was growing stronger and bolder, until at last, one bright morning, we found his place vacant, and knew that the noble bird, true to his natural instincts, had flown away, far beyond and above his uncongenial birthplace, to find his own rightful place in the world.

Mrs. Mack laughed heartily when we told her about it.

"The silly bird," she said, "to fly away from the nest where he could have had a shelter and plenty to eat for nothing, just for the privilege of perching on

some high rock and looking the sun out of countenance. For my part, I never could see that eaglets were any better off than other birds; they can fly high and far to be sure, but as long as the others find just what they want right at their own door, I don't see but they're just as well off."

I felt my enthusiasm considerably dampened by this matter-of-fact view of the case, but Rob's eyes only lighted up the more brightly, and there was a rough eloquence in his boyish tones as he exclaimed eagerly:

"O yes, indeed, mother! they are a thousand times better off than those stupid stay-at-home shore birds, that just eat and sleep their lives away. Why, I've seen an eagle fly up, up, so far that he looked like a speck on the blue of the sky; and then, what do they care for the wildest gale that ever blew? Their great strong wings can bear them above it, and it's a great thing to be *above* what everybody else is afraid of."

"That's just like one of your notions," laughed his mother, with her usual good-natured uncomprehensiveness. But it was evident even to my childish eyes, that the high-spirited, man-minded boy was fast growing beyond the simple commonplaces that filled the minds of those with whom he daily associated, and was even now reaching out his stronger talons to grasp at higher objects than they had any comprehension of.

It was a sad day when my guardian came to take me back to that now thrice-dreaded home in the city; and in the extremity of my grief and dread, I actually dared to beg the privilege of a longer stay with the only beings who had ever shown any love or tenderness for me in my desolate orphanage; but Mr. Walters' imperturbable "Couldn't possibly let you stay any longer; it's high time you were at school, with other girls of your age," silenced me most effectually, and it was with the bitterest tears that I had ever yet shed that I bade a last farewell to the only spot on earth where I had known an hour's happiness, and prepared to go back to my old life of lonely, loveless monotony.

How I clung about the neck of dear "Mammy Margy," as, in playful imitation of her own children, I had learned to call her, sobbing the good-bye that it almost broke my heart to speak; while baby Jack clung weeping to my knees, and Molly, with the tears streaming down her chubby cheeks, declared that "Milly shouldn't go away!" a motion that Rob, in his manly fashion, eagerly seconded.

"Don't take her away just yet, sir," he said earnestly, and with a suspicious hoarseness in his voice that I well understood. "It'll be quite warm here for five or six weeks longer, and it'll do her ever so much good, I know."

Mr. Walters looked rather amused and a good deal surprised. "You seem to be quite a favorite here," he said, with, as I fancied, a half-contemptuous look at my tear-swollen face; then, to Rob: "I don't think it best for her to stay longer, now. Perhaps, some time, she can come again."

And with this half-promise we were forced to be content; and as I hung about Molly's neck at parting a small gold piece, my only treasure, I repeated with all the little courage that I could muster, the hopeful prophecy: "I *will* come again, just as sure as I live."

But alas for all our hopeful anticipations of a speedy reunion! Mrs. Walters' health had failed so rapidly in my absence that she declared herself unequal to the annoyance of "having a child about the house" any longer, so I was packed away to a boarding-school where I remained for the next five years, spending my vacations at my guardian's, where everything seemed more sombre and stagnant than ever in contrast with the cheerful bustle and sociability of school life, which, in my shy way, I had thoroughly enjoyed from the first.

At the end of that time my guardian died, and an examination of his affairs disclosed the startling fact that instead of being the heiress to a moderate competency, as I had supposed, I was literally penniless, all my property having been swallowed up in some imprudent speculations in which Mr. Walters had been concerned.

In this strait I was only too thankful to accept a position as teacher in the establishment where I had been so long a pupil, and for the next six years my life timed itself to the changeless routine of the schoolroom, with little opportunity, and at length with little desire for change; but, as the sixth summer vacation approached, my friend, the principal, took occasion to remind me with affectionate earnest-

ness, that for my health's sake I must seek some recreation. "A trip to the mountains, or a few weeks at the sea-side, would make a new creature of you."

Suddenly from out the dim and sombre past flashed a picture that sent the calm, even current in my veins dancing with a wild, unwonted thrill of delightful excitement; but the lady principal only heard the quietly spoken words, "I believe I will take your advice, and try a few weeks at the sea-side," and in less than twenty-four hours my trunks were packed, and I had started on my search for rest, and—I laughed at myself for the fancy, but the faces of my old friends would rise up before me just as I saw them last, tender and tearful, and I *would* not believe in any possibility of death or change.

"Do you know of a family living here named Mack?" was my first question to the landlady of the hotel, on the morning after my arrival. The little hamlet had grown to a thriving village since I saw it last, and the large, finely built hotel was already well filled with summer visitors.

The good woman shook her head slowly, and with a doubtful air said, "We've lived here almost two years, but I don't remember having heard of anybody by that name."

"The father was a fisherman, 'Ben Mack' I believe they called him, and there were three children, two boys and a girl. They lived in a little, rough-built cottage, half-way down the cliff, north of Beaker's Peak."

"I don't know any family that answers to the description; but, perhaps," brightening up with a new idea, "it may be that the Mac is only a part of the name. There are plenty of Macs about here, the Laughlins, and the MacDougals, and the MacLennans,—it might be one of them, but they are none of them fishermen."

I shook my head dejectedly. It was evident that I could get no information from this source, and I made up my mind to a tour of inspection, by myself, that very day.

Everything about the cliff and shore was so vividly fresh in my mind that I felt sure I should have no difficulty in tracing out the old landmarks, and finding at least the rocks and sands that had been to me like dear, familiar friends in those other days.

But I was astonished and not a little disappointed, for either my memory was at fault, or the many changes that had taken place in these intervening years puzzled and baffled me at every turn, putting a new two-story house with green blinds in the very spot where a clump of hemlocks should have been, and a broad field of Indian corn where the wild raspberry vines should have marked the spot where we gathered our baskets full of the luscious fruit; while even the steep cliffs that I had once looked upon with childish wonder, seemed, somehow, to have dwindled in height and grandeur, and the scene of many a daring climbing exploit was, to my mature vision, scarcely more, after all, than a huckleberry hill.

I was walking slowly along, trying in vain to find some familiar feature in the scene about me, when I noticed, all at once, that the sunshine had vanished and a great black cloud was just showing its scowling face over the top of Beaker's Peak, warning me that a heavy shower was close at hand; and the next moment my watchful eyes caught sight of a narrow footpath that wound across the face of the cliff, and without stopping to wonder or rejoice, I fairly ran down the little pathway whose every winding was perfectly familiar to me; for here, at last, I had found

the clew that I had been so anxiously seeking; and when, in one of the turnings, I caught a glimpse of the roof of the cottage below, I longed to shout aloud in my glad excitement.

There it stood, in the exact spot where it had stood eleven years before, with the same background of shadowy evergreens, the same grand outlook from its sunny doorway. Only the house itself was changed. Instead of the roughly built, unpretending, yet cosy little dwelling that had sheltered the fisherman's treasures beneath its humble roof, appeared a commodious, modern-built cottage, whose ornamental finish and coat of gay straw-colored paint gave it a jaunty and rather exclusive air that struck upon me with almost as much of a chill as did the fast-falling raindrops that were already drenching my light clothing as I stood on the steps, waiting an answer to my ring.

her formal salutation in as few words as possible, while with my heart in a perfect tumult of hope and fear, I sat by the window watching the fast-falling rain, and trying with all my might to keep back the bitter tears that threatened to betray me. We went over the few commonplaces that strangers consider essential to civility, and then, with my heart in my throat, I said clumsily—for I must speak or cry—"Did you, some years ago, have a little girl from B—, spending the summer with you?"

Mrs. Mack looked significantly at her daughter as she asked coldly, "Do you mean a 'Grey' girl? 'Mildred Grey,' wasn't it, Mary?"

Mary nodded an indifferent assent.

"I remember her particularly," went on the lady, with an unpleasant sharpness in her tones, "because her guardian played us such a mean trick, getting us to keep her a whole summer and never paying us a

cent for her board. She was a sickly little thing, and I was young and soft-hearted in those days, so I was just fool enough to take her right in with my own children, and wait upon her by inches, mending her clothes and doing everything for her that her own mother could have done, and never getting a cent for it, after all."

"You forget my *dollar*, mother," laughed Molly disdainfully. And her mother echoed the laugh as she said in an explanatory tone, "The child gave my daughter here a gold dollar for a keepsake, and she bought her first pair of gloves with it. I recollect my husband used to joke me about my summer boarder that paid me in gloves."

I was not cold now; every drop of blood in my body was boiling with mortification and pain, and I was too ashamed as well as too thoroughly heart-stricken to be angry even. Still, I think I could have controlled myself and preserved my incognito, but at that moment a sound of boyish feet sounded without, and a bright-faced lad peered curiously in at the open door. There were the same bright, saucy eyes, the same crisp, black curls, the same dimples even, and with an irrepressible cry I held out my arms, with the tears streaming down my cheeks, while regardless of consequences I sobbed out, "O, baby Jack! Don't *you* remember me?"

The frightened boy stared at me in mute astonishment, but the sound of my own voice had broken the spell, and with a feeling as if I were suffocating, I rushed to the door, and regardless of Mrs.

Mack's broken exclamations and remonstrances, I went out into the driving rain with a feeling of absolute relief, and with only the bitter, bitter cry welling up from my heart, "The one bright dream of a life broken and lost forever!"

I paid for my imprudence with a cold, and my landlady expressed her surprise that I had not taken refuge in some house until the shower was over.

"Why didn't you go into Mr. MacLennan's cottage? It is right on the side of the cliff, where you were when the shower first overtook you."

"MacLennan?" I repeated, with a bewildered look.

"Yes; they live in a pretty straw-colored cottage half-way up the side, and are reckoned some of our first people here. MacLennan keeps the largest grocery establishment in town, and his wife and Mary have everything that money can buy."

I turned away my face as I asked tremulously, "Is this daughter their only child?"

"O no, they have two boys,—the oldest, Robert, is a splendid fellow. He follows the sea, has gone



MASTER'S SLIPPERS.—A. T. ELWES.

A young lady opened the door and with cool civility invited me to enter; and as I followed her into a parlor overcrowded with expensive but ill selected and arranged furniture, I tried in vain to find in the curled and crimped and frizzled head, and flounced and ruffled figure, some trace of the rough and rosy little Molly of other days; for that it *was* Molly, in spite of her metamorphosis, I never doubted, although the laughing eyes had lost their innocent, unsuspicious look, and the rosy mouth had acquired a somewhat supercilious curve that had once been a stranger to it.

I felt chilled and disappointed; while, seeing that I was unrecognized, I excused my intrusion on account of the sudden shower, and waited with a beating heart the appearance of the mistress of the house, who would, I fully believed, recognize and welcome me. But when I saw the changed and hardened face, fresh and comely still, but with all the old-time motherliness faded out of it, I could not bring myself to speak of those other days, but returned

mate several voyages, and now there is a fine brig being fitted up that he is to go master of in a few weeks. He is a noble fellow, not so much of a money-catcher as his father, but generous and honest as the day. Why, bless me!" with a glance from the window, "there he is now, coming up here,—that tall young man in a Panama hat."

I looked, and saw a tall, broad-chested man, with the unmistakable gait of a sailor, whose face, bronzed and bearded as it was, wore still the same frank, kindly look that had so often warmed my heart in our childish days. "He's coming in," fluttered the landlady in pleased excitement. "Why, Miss Grey! he's asking for you!" and the next moment a manly step sounded upon the threshold, a pair of eyes brimming over with kindness and welcome looked into mine, and a strong, warm hand clasped mine in a grasp that was almost painful as its owner exclaimed in a voice that was fairly husky with emotion, "Why, Milly Grey—little Milly! I should have known you if I had run across you in the South Sea Islands. Why, I believe," drawing the back of his hand across his eyes with a half-ashamed laugh, "I never was so glad to see anybody before in my life."

There was no change here: the true, noble, honest heart of the boy beat as warmly as ever in the bosom of the man, and for the next hour we talked as only those talk who have no thought nor fear of possible misapprehension or want of sympathy. With alternate tears and laughter, we went back, step by step, over each little footprint of the past, recalling a score of incidents, merry and sad, rehearsing the very songs that we used to sing and the stories that we told sitting in the soft purple twilight, on the rough doorstep, with only the lapping of the waves and the chirp of some belated insect for an accompaniment.

Again we paddled with our bare feet in the shining waves, or waded out, hand in hand, into the foamy surf, holding our breath in a delightful excitement that was almost terror as we felt the strong undertow lifting our feet from the sandy bottom in spite of all our efforts to keep a foothold; or hunted for clams among the dripping rocks and seaweed, or the curious sea-urchins and star-fish that the receding tide sometimes left upon the wet sands.

It had grown so dark in the room before he rose to go that I could not see his face, although I could feel the painful embarrassment in his tone, as he said, hesitatingly, "That money, Mildred, that—that you sent to my mother this morning, we—they couldn't think of keeping it, of course. You must take it back." And he tried to put a roll of bills into my hand; but I could no more have touched them than I could have handled live coals.

"No," I said with a firmness that I hoped he would understand, "the money is rightfully theirs, and if my guardian was dishonest, that is no excuse for my being so."

"But," he reasoned earnestly, "for the sake of our childish friendship, by its thousand pleasant memories—O, Milly! don't try to repay our love with money!"

My eyes filled with tears, bitterly regretful drops, but I forced myself to speak the truth,—I could not bear to be misunderstood in this matter.

"If your mother and sister felt as you do about it, I should be not only willing but proud to be indebted to them for the kindness and care that my childhood received from their hands; but"—I paused a moment in painful embarrassment—"as it is, I could neither sleep nor rest if their services remained unpaid."

I was understood; and, replacing the money in his pocket-book, he said regretfully, but without a shadow of anger in his tones: "Perhaps you are right. I think I should feel much the same under the same circumstances." And with a grave but kindly "Good night" he left me, never more to come back again, for that very night a dispatch was received that his vessel was ready, and he started for New York early the next morning, leaving a tender good-bye for me with his mother, who made the message an excuse for calling, and overwhelmed me with apologies and explanations that I received for just what they were worth—no more.

But the shawl! O, yes! It was just after I had commenced teaching a city school, some seven or eight years after that, that a package was sent me all the way from India, containing this shawl and a letter from Captain Robert MacLennan, written in the old frank, cordial fashion, telling me of his success in his profession, and describing with all the humor and vividness of his boyish days his various

adventures on land and sea, and winding up with the news (I could almost see the look, half-shy, half-proud, of his manly face as he wrote the words) of his coming marriage to a young English lady, whose father was some kind of a government official out there, and who was, to use his own words, "a fit mate for a king."

"I hope," she added, after a pause, and there was a quaint, pathetic tenderness in her tones as she spoke, "that she proved a fit mate for my eagle."

"Is he living now?" I asked, below my breath.

"No. His mother sent me the paper containing the news of his death, more than twenty years ago. He died as a brave man should, in saving from death the helpless ones committed to his care. He was captain of a large emigrant ship, and the vessel sprung a leak when they were almost in sight of the American shores. Of course there was a terrible panic—everybody rushing for the boats, the strong trampling down and thrusting aside the weak in their unreasoning terror; but he stood by the gangway, pistol in hand, and threatened to shoot the first man who tried to get into the boats before the women and children, and when the last boat-load was about to push off, with room for only *one* more, he put a poor helpless sick lad, the only one left besides himself on the deck of the sinking vessel, into the vacant place, and calling out to his mate, as the boat pushed off: 'Give my love to my wife and children, and tell them that I died at my post,' he stood calmly, with folded arms, on the deck of his vessel, and went down with her into the fathomless ocean, with not an eye of friend or stranger to look upon his dying agony."

She covered her face with her hands, and I could see the tears trickle from between her thin fingers as I stole softly away, feeling that in a sorrow like hers, words of sympathy, however sincere, must be ill-timed and useless rather than welcome: and wondering, in my own heart, at the unwritten romances in which some of the most apparently commonplace lives are rich, if one only has the skill and patience to decipher them.

Later, in speaking of her to my friend the matron, I expressed some surprise that one who had been a successful teacher for so many years should not have saved enough, with her simple, inexpensive habits, to have insured her against want in her old age,—for I knew that besides the usual admission fee of a hundred dollars, she had very little that she could call her own.

The lady shook her head gravely. "There was a woman named MacLennan, I think, who was for years a pensioner upon her bounty, so that she could do little more than meet her expenses with her salary. The woman, who was a widow and childless, was aged and very infirm, but I never fully understood what claim she had upon Miss Grey, who cared for her with the devoted tenderness of a daughter until her death, impoverishing herself that the last days of her charge might be easy and pleasant."

I could only utter the simple commonplace that came to my lips: "It was like her."

And the matron nodded a cordial assent.

—Mrs. H. G. Rowe.

A FOREST POOL IN LOWER NORMANDY.

OF late years, it can not be denied, French art has done more to supply the world with fine cattle-pieces than that of all the other countries together. And the scene before us displays many of the best characteristics of that school, as well as of scenery and features so familiar to the tourist who has made any sojourn in Lower Normandy. The meek-eyed, full-uddered cows, in repose whether standing or lying, are of that gentle breed from whose milk proceeds the rich Normandy butter; the broad-spreading, low-branched trees seem sweeping away against just such a sky of mingled glare and gloom—of sunlit cloud, so to speak—as seems equally fitted to the country and the accessories. One can almost breathe the perfume of the birches in the middle foreground—almost feel the coolness of the water laving the legs of the principal figure, and making all the flower-dotted grass equally refreshing as beds for the more indolent—almost see the drops trickling from the mouth of the wearer of the bell, fresh from that last sip—almost hear the faint tinkle of the little bell stirred by that motion, and by and by to sound cheerily over the broad *landes* in the travel of the herd homeward.

NOVEMBER.

"HO! to arms for the deadly fight!"

The echoing challenge sounds,
Into the broad arena's light
The peerless athlete bounds;
His giant limbs erect and bare,
Like rock-ribbed pillars tower,
And his massive, corded sinews wear
The kingliness of power.

He has hurled his leafy gauntlets down,
He has bared his mighty breast,
And his brawny arms have the lances thrown
In watchful, waiting rest;
The scarlet berry and purple vine
Their garlands round him throw,
And the white frost-jewels gleam and shine
On his haughty, regal brow.

His recreant court have turned and fled
At the bugle's martial ring,
And his stalwart soldiers, cold and dead,
On the field lie mouldering;
His banner, borne in his mighty hands,
Its folds to the fierce winds fling:
Last of his race, defiant stands
The dauntless Autumn King!

Mild-eyed September taught him first
A sister's faithful love,
And his manly heart into blossom burst
And its dewy garlands wove;
But the mighty Reaper his sickle swung;
And the snowy blossoms wave,
And the loving breeze the dirge has sung,
Above affection's grave.

Soft o'er his waiting senses stole
October's crimson gleam,
Steeping body and heart and soul
In a burning passion-dream;
Lulling hope to the perfect rest
By full fruition given,
Sinking to sleep on her glowing breast,
And dreaming that earth was heaven.

But the Reaper gathered the form so fair
In his cold and ghostly arm,
Leaving the kingly lover there,
Alone in the raging storm;
Where mournful memories wildly sweep,
And their maddening pageants swell,
Muttering curses dark and deep,
And deeming that earth was hell.

The mists of doubt hang dark and drear
Over his regal brow,
And the ghastly, haunting shapes of fear,
Around him mock and mow:
The weird night-wind, with stealthy tread,
Walks moaning round the tomb
Where his hopes and joys and loves lie dead
In their light and song and bloom.

Brother nor friend can the monarch boast,
Sister nor love hath he,
Worn and wearied, and tempest-tossed
On the battle's surging sea;
Thundering down on the field of time
The hoofs of the foeman ring,
Calmly he fronts them, in strength sublime,
And "every inch a king!"

The mad winds shriek and the billows roar,
And the forests rock and swing,
As on the conquering legions pour
Of the mighty Winter King;
With gleaming blade and murderous hands
The foemen round him throng—
Firm as a rock the athlete stands
Mid the serried hosts so strong.

"Smite to the death!" the monarch calls—
He quarter asks nor gives;
Pierced by a thousand wounds, he falls
On the brown and crumbling leaves;
The scarlet holly and fragrant pine
Their spicy incense throw,
And the shining laurel leaves entwine
To wreath his pallid brow.

Purple and gray the mountains tower,
Azure and pearl the sky,
Misty shapes through the forest pour
Where he lays him down to die.
Crimson and gold the sunset cloud
His dying couch has spread,
The Indian summer weaves his shroud
And the Autumn King lies dead.

—Side Meriwether.

MASTER'S SLIPPERS. — Carlo is almost human, in many respects, and something better than human in a few, one of which is being illustrated in our picture. Carlo is always an early riser, and very fond of going out on a walk with his master: his master is indolent, and not disposed to be early stirring. So Carlo brings him his slippers, to the door, as a bit of a hint, and seldom fails of his object in arousing him and hurrying him out to the morning air and the sunshine.